Gull Lake Community Schools

School Bus Safety for Parents & Students

2026-27

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TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

The Gull Lake Community School District operates school buses for the convenience and safety of schoolchildren. The Michigan Department of Education and the Gull Lake Board of Education govern the rules and regulations. The following rules and regulations have been established to assure the safe transportation of students to and from school and school sponsored activities. **The law does not require Transportation of general education students to and from school.** It must be understood that riding a school bus is a privilege, which can be revoked.

SCHOOL DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Transportation Supervisor shall have overall responsibility for supervising the transportation program and establishing bus stops.
2. No student will be put off a bus en-route to or from school. In extreme disciplinary cases, a student may be required to return to the school, or the transportation office and alternative transportation arrangements will be made.
3. Bus stops shall not be changed by a driver without the consent of the Transportation Supervisor.
4. Bus stops will be designated by the Transportation Supervisor in full compliance with the laws pertaining to such stops.
5. New stops shall not be initiated unless: (A) the distances are greater than one-half mile for secondary and one-quarter mile for elementary students (students living on streets with a 35 mph or less speed limit may be required to walk further); (B) in the judgment of the Transportation Supervisor there are too many students for that particular location; (C) legitimate safety concerns cannot otherwise be satisfied.
6. Walking distances and bus routes may be adjusted temporarily if necessary, by reason of unsafe or impassable roads.
7. The bus driver is always in complete charge of the bus.
8. The driver is authorized to assign seats to an individual or the whole bus, as necessary.
9. The use of jump seat is an approved method to load and unload passengers. Drivers are authorized to use jump seat at their discretion.
10. For transportation to and from field trips and other activities, District students not affiliated with the trip activity, non-district students, and/or children of preschool age shall not be permitted to ride on the trip vehicle.

PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Parents/guardians are required to register their child each year to ride the school bus. An email will be sent to parents in April when registration is open for the following school year to register your child for transportation for the following school year. Registration is requested via the Transportation app. Students will be assigned to buses in the order in which they are received until buses are full.

2. Parent/guardians are responsible for their child's transportation. If a student is suspended from

transportation, this means all transportation including sporting events, band trips, field trips, etc. The student may participate in any of the events but must provide his/her own transportation.

3. Parents/guardians are responsible for their child's conduct at the bus stop.
4. Parents/guardians are responsible for getting their child to and from the bus stop.
    - An area of importance is the need for a parent to be present when a kindergarten/Young 5/GSRP child is discharged from the bus. **Should the bus driver arrive at your child's bus stop, which only services your child and/or other kindergarten/Young 5/ GSRP students,** and you are not present, the driver will return your child to the school building or Transportation Office. The office will attempt to call all phone numbers provided to us. If at that time we are unable to reach someone to pick up the child, the police will be contacted. If you use a childcare provider, he/she will need to be present when your child is discharged from the bus. Drivers are not allowed to accept notes or verbal directions from parents/childcare providers waiving the need for the parent/childcare provider to be visible at the bus stop.
    - Should a temporary situation arise which prevents you from meeting the bus, you may send a note to the school designating an alternate stop address where another adult will be present to meet your child. Please include the name of the adult that will be meeting your child at the bus stop. When indicating an alternate bus stop, it must be an existing stop being serviced. If you need the address of an existing bus stop, please contact the Transportation Office.
5. Middle and High School students may be required to walk up to one-half mile to a bus stop or to school. Elementary students or younger, may be required to walk up to one-quarter mile to a bus stop or to school. Students living on streets with a 35 mph or less speed limit may be required to walk further.
6. In general, buses will not travel on private roads, cul-de-sacs or driveways (handicapped exception). **Distances walked on private roads or driveways to a designated bus stop will not count toward the one-half mile and the one-quarter mile limits.**
7. If you have a child riding a special needs bus and your child will not be riding the school bus to school (ill, getting a ride, out of town), parents/guardians must call the Transportation Office, 548-3891. If you take your child to school, you must inform the Transportation Office so that the office knows your child will need a ride home.
    - Parents of students riding a regular education bus **do not** need to call the Transportation Office if their child is not riding the bus.
8. Parents/guardians have the responsibility to identify a single pickup location and a single drop off location, per semester. The bus stop will be assigned within the prescribed walking distance.
9. If your child will need to ride a bus other than the one to which he/she is assigned, please call the Transportation Office to make certain that there will be room on the bus for your student. Provide your child with a note for his/her school at least one day in advance, if possible, of your request. The school office will initial the note or issue a bus pass for the driver. Following this procedure helps school staff members know where your child is in case of an emergency. *Students will not be allowed to ride to a different locations without a bus pass.*
10. During periods of inclement weather parents and students are advised to monitor the following television stations for school delays or closings.

WWMT-Channel 3	**WOOD-Channel 8/41**	**FOX-Channel 17**
Gull Lake Website	**Gull Lake Facebook**	**Gull Lake Twitter**

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AT THE BUS STOP

Bus information will be available through the parent app in August once routes are complete. Please continue to check the app until bus information becomes available to you. For the first 3-weeks of school be at the bus stop 15-minutes prior to the time designated on the app. Times are estimated based upon information known at the time the information becomes available. After approximately 3 weeks the bus times should stabilize. The stabilized time will become the bus pick-up and drop-off times. If changes occur after the 3-weeks, you will receive the updated bus information via the parent App. Bus times are subject to change at any time throughout the school year. There is an app available through the parent portal that will provide an estimated arrival time for your student's bus. It is still required that students are waiting at the bus stop 15- minutes prior to the posted bus time.

After the first 3 weeks of school please adhere to the following:

1. Be at the designated bus stop at least ten (10) minutes before the scheduled pick-up time (earlier in inclement weather). Wait ten (10) minutes after the scheduled pick-up time before contacting the Transportation Office.
2. Students are to be standing at the bus stop, 10-feet from the road, as the bus approaches. Do not have students wait in cars, or in the house.
3. Stay out of the roadway while waiting for the bus. Refrain from pushing, shoving, fighting or any other inappropriate behavior at the bus stop.
4. Board and leave the bus only at your designated stop.

STUDENT CROSSING PROCEDURES

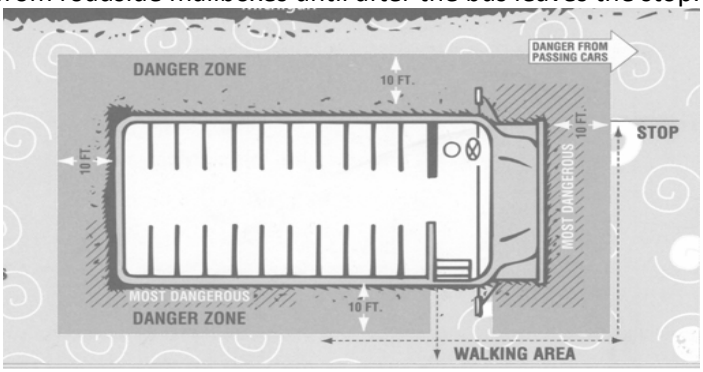
Please train your students to follow these procedures when they must cross the street. GLCS School Bus Drivers must be consistent and are expected to follow all loading, unloading and cross procedures for the safety of each passenger. Parents, who escort their children to and from the bus when crossing, must set the example for their children and adhere to these important safety procedures. Everyone needs to know that not all cars stop as required by state law, even where the red lights are flashing on school buses.

When crossing the street to board the bus:

1. Students wait in a group at the designated bus stop at least 10 feet away from the edge of the roadway.
2. The bus driver gives one instruction to cross. Drivers will use the walking motion with their fingers to indicate it is safe to cross or hold their hand with palm out to indicate, "STOP". If it is dark, the driver may turn on an inside light so he/she may be seen easier.
3. Students proceed directly across the road and always stay 10 feet in front of the bus during the crossing procedure. Stay out of the "DANGER ZONE!" (explained below).
4. Do not stop in the middle of the street or **cross behind the bus.**

When crossing the street after leaving the bus:

1. Students exit the bus and walk four steps beyond the crossing arm. Stay out of the "DANGER ZONE!"
2. Students stand in a group and look to the driver for instruction to cross.
3. Drivers will use the walking motion with their fingers to indicate it is safe to cross or hold their hand with palm out to indicate, "STOP". If it is dark, drivers may turn on an inside light to be seen easier.
4. Students proceed to a point even with the left side of the bus and STOP.
5. Students look left and right for passing cars.
6. Students look to the driver for instruction to complete the crossing.
7. **Do not cross behind the bus.**
8. **If a paper or article goes under the school bus, always ask the bus driver for help.**
9. Do not get mail from roadside mailboxes until after the bus leaves the stop.



STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES ON THE BUS

1. The building's student code of conduct remains in full force and effect while on the bus. Failure to abide by school rules while on the bus may result in discipline, up to and including permanent expulsion from all public schools in Michigan, depending on the offense.
2. Classroom behavior is expected of all students on Gull Lake buses.
3. Respect the driver and other students.
4. Follow the driver's directions the first time they are given.
5. Enter and leave the bus only through the front door except in case of an emergency and at the direction of the driver.
6. Remain seated while the bus is in motion. Wait until the bus comes to a full stop before leaving your seat.
7. Keep conversations at classroom level. A classroom level is defined as a voice level that cannot be heard more than two seats away. Loud and distracting talk or noise can easily distract a driver.
8. Keep the bus clean. Do not throw items on the floor or damage the bus in anyway. No eating, drinking or gum is allowed on the bus.

9. No spitting in or out of a school bus.
10. Possession of tobacco, nicotine products, vapes, marijuana, alcohol products, illegal substances, matches or lighters, weapons, unsafe items (such as glass containers) or playing with sharp or dangerous items on the bus is prohibited.
11. Do not use profane, vulgar, or abusive language, racial slurs or harass other students. Do not shout at passing persons and/or vehicles.
12. Animals of any kind on the bus are prohibited.
13. Carry only items on the bus that can be held safely in your lap while riding the bus.
14. Selling or distributing anything on the bus is prohibited.
15. Do not extend any part of your body out an open window.
16. Skateboards, hockey sticks or anything that cannot safely fit on the students' lap are not permitted on the school bus.

BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

On the first few days of school, the school buses do not depart from the school buildings on time. This is particularly true of the K-5 buildings. Extra time is given to allow students to locate where the bus is in the bus line-up and to ensure students board the correct school bus. It is not uncommon for the school bus to leave up to 30-minutes late the first day of school. By the end of the first week of school most buses are leaving the school buildings on time.

SCHOOL BUS DEPART TIMES

	Regular Day	Half Day	Early Release Day
High School	2:27pm	11:07am	12:51 pm
Middle School	2:39pm	11:17am	1:01 pm
Ryan	3:47pm	12:27pm	2:12 pm
Richland/Kellogg	3:57pm	12:37pm	2:22 pm
Gateway	2:10pm	10:53am	12:41 pm

There are numerous Half-days and Early Release dates throughout the school year. Please be advised on a Half-day, your student will arrive home to the bus stop approximately 3 hours and 20 minutes early; on an Early Release day your student will arrive home approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes early.

ABANDONED BUS STOPS

If your student does not ride for 10-consecutive days, anytime within the school year, they may be deleted from the bus route. In the event this occurs, and your student needs to ride periodically, you may contact

the Transportation Department and you will be provided the location and time for the nearest bus stop. If he/she is involved in an afterschool program, call and he/she will not be deleted from the bus route.

CONTACT WITH BUS DRIVERS

During the school year, it may become necessary for a parent to contact a bus driver regarding a child's transportation. Should this need arise, please contact the Transportation Office at 548-3890. A message will be left for the driver to return your call upon the completion of the route. **Please do not try to have conversations with the bus driver at the bus stop. This situation results in the bus falling behind schedule and arriving to school late.**

CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATION OF BUS SAFETY RULES

Students who choose to break the rules, or who make themselves general nuisances are endangering other students' lives by distracting the driver. These students will be denied the privilege of riding the school bus and may be subject to further discipline, up to and including permanent expulsion from all public schools in Michigan, depending on the nature of the offense. The violations listed below will be handled by the bus driver following Steps 1 through 4. Any violation may be processed immediately at Step 5 when approved by the Transportation Supervisor.

VIOLATIONS

1. Classroom behavior at all times. A classroom voice cannot be heard more than 2 seats away.
2. Obey the bus driver.
3. No Eating, drinking, chewing gum.
4. No littering.
5. Hands/heads/feet remain inside the bus.
6. Keep hands/feet to oneself.
7. No dangerous/inappropriate behavior.
8. No throwing/shooting objects in/out of bus.
9. No destruction of school property.
10. No profanity/verbal abuse/bullying.
11. No unauthorized use of emergency exits.
12. Use of cell phones, see District Policy #5209
13. No skateboards, hockey sticks or anything that does not fit safely on students' lap.

BUS CONDUCT REPORTING PROCEDURES

Bus Conduct Reports will be completed by the bus driver on the day of the incident. Drivers will deal with any violations requiring a one-day suspension from the bus. The Transportation Supervisor will deal with all violations and infractions requiring more than a one-day suspension of privileges. Students suspended from

a bus are not allowed to ride any Gull Lake School bus. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to make other transportation arrangements.

Step 1 The first violation by a student will be handled by the bus driver as a verbal warning and signed by the student.

Step 2 The second violation will be handled by the bus driver by contacting the student's parent/guardian. The date of the contact will be noted on the form.

Step 3 The third violation will result in the written notice sent home with the student. The date of the third violation and the student's signature will be required. The written notice must be signed by a parent/guardian and returned before the student may ride the bus.

Step 4 The fourth violation will result in the second written notice sent home with the student and a one-day suspension as noted. The written notice must be signed by a parent/guardian and returned before the student may ride the bus.

Additional violations infractions will be handled at the discretion of the Transportation Supervisor.

Severe Infractions will be handled by the Transportation Supervisor following Steps 5 through 7.

Severe Infractions:

1. Fighting/Physical Contact/Abuse
2. Threats of Physical Violence/Harassment
3. Possession of tobacco/lighters/matches
4. Possession of weapons
5. Possession of illegal drugs/alcohol
6. Spitting on another person

Step 5 will result in a three (3) day suspension of riding privileges.

Step 6 will result in a five (5) day suspension of riding privileges.

Step 7 will result in a ten (10) day suspension of riding privileges, permanent exclusion from the bus, and/or suspension or expulsion from school.

Further violations may result in the suspension of bus riding privileges up to and including the remainder of the school year at the discretion of the Transportation Supervisor.

Once a violation is processed at Step 5, further violations regardless of severity will be processed to Step 6 and then Step 7. Violations beyond Step 7 may result in a student being suspended from the bus for the remainder of the school year. Any student engaging in a severe violation may be processed to Step 7 or have their riding privileges suspended for the rest of the school year when approved by the Transportation Supervisor.

EXPULSION FROM BUS

Please Note:

1. Possession of Weapons will result in expulsion from the bus and may result in permanent expulsion from all public schools in Michigan.

2. Possession of illegal drugs will result in expulsion from the bus and may result in permanent expulsion from the District.

A parent/guardian is required to sign each Bus Conduct Report to acknowledge receipt. The parent should retain the WHITE copy. All other copies, with the appropriate signatures, must be returned to the bus driver before the student may ride the bus again.

Discipline is generally progressive during the entire school year. Violations that occur within the last ten (10) days of the school year or extended suspensions may carry over to the following school year.

Due process, for bus misconduct (except for weapons violations or illegal drug possession) or application of process, may be appealed as follows:

1. Transportation Supervisor within (2) days of notification of discipline.
2. Safety Committee via written request to the Transportation Supervisor within two (2) days of notification of the Supervisor's answer.
3. Superintendent via written request within (5) school days of notification of the Transportation Safety Committee decision.

Any student found to be in possession of a weapon (as defined by state law) or illegal substance will be denied bus transportation for the remainder of the school year. Reinstatement of privileges will require School Board approval. Any changes to Michigan State Law supersede this policy and will require students to meet those requirements for reinstatement.

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION – PUPIL TRANSPORTATION FACTS

1. State law does not require that pupil transportation be provided to regular education children.
2. There are no special laws or regulations for transporting kindergarten students.
3. No law specifies the maximum distance a student may walk to a school bus stop.
4. State law requires that bus stops be at least 200 feet from one another. State law does not specify the maximum distance between school bus stops.
5. State law requires 400 feet of clear and continuous visibility in each direction at a designated bus stop with speed limits over 35 mph. State law requires 200 feet of clear and continuous visibility in each direction at a designated bus stop with speed limits less than 35 mph.
6. There is no maximum riding time for a child in kindergarten through grade twelve. Department of Education rules require that preschool children ride no more than 60 continuous minutes.
7. It is the parent's responsibility to see that their children get to and from the school bus stop.
8. Parents are responsible for the conduct of their children until the school bus arrives at the bus stop.
9. State law authorizes local boards of education to designate school bus stops.
10. Local boards decide if a child may be picked up at a bus stop other than the one serving his/her residence.
11. After the fourth Friday of each school year, schools cannot load more students than the seating

capacity of their school bus.